

GOD'S HAND AT EVENTIDE NO. 3290

A SERMON
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“Now the hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening.”
Ezekiel 33:22

PERHAPS in the special sense in which Ezekiel uses this expression, we shall not expect to feel “the hand of the LORD” upon us. God may not call us to prophesy as Ezekiel did, although in the Scriptural use of the word “prophesy” the preacher of the Word is still called to deliver the message which he has received from his Lord’s lips. The days of special visions and voices and prophesyings have passed away, but we can still say with Peter, “We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”

I think, however, that we may use our text with some profit in other senses, “The hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening.” So we will inquire, first, *what hand was this?* Secondly, *what time was this?* And then, thirdly, *what teaching is there for us in this incident?*

I. So first, let us ask, **WHAT HAND WAS THIS?**

The answer is very clearly stated in the text, “the hand of the LORD.” We will examine this expression, first in its connection with the Lord’s people, and then in its relation to sinners in whom a gracious work is beginning.

First then, *looking at this expression in its connection with the Lord’s people*, I remark that sometimes, “the hand of the LORD” is laid very heavily upon them in chastisement. It is no unusual thing for a child of God to say, “The hand of the LORD was upon me,” and often he has not merely to add, “in the evening,” but he can truthfully say, “All day long his hand has been heavily laid upon me.”

There are some of God’s children who are very frequently the subjects of His chastening, and if any of you have come here smarting under the blows of His rod, you must not murmur, for this is the treatment that is meted out to all the rest of the Lord’s family. It is through much tribulation that they enter the kingdom, so let not any one of us take up the lamentation of Jeremiah, “I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath,” but let us all expect to follow in the footsteps of the flock, well knowing that—

*“The path of sorrow, and that path, alone
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown.”*

Be not astonished, therefore, if “the hand of the LORD” is laid upon you thus, for “if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?” Yet while you feel the weight of God’s hand upon you, never forget that it is your Father’s hand. Whatever form your trial may take—whether it is the loss of a child or of a parent, or the withdrawal of temporal prosperity, or the smiting of the body with aches and pains—the rod is never in any hand but the paternal one, and even while the Father smites He loves.

Let this be your comfort, that it is not the hand of an enemy that is upon you, you are not suffering from a crushing blow from the foeman’s mailed hand, but the stroke, whether it is heavy or light, is wholly caused by your loving Father’s hand.

“The hand of the LORD” is also a humbling hand. When God lays His afflicting hand upon us, He takes away much of our fancied beauty, and lets us see the ugliness of our natural deformity. We thought we were very patient until we had need of patience, and then we found what a murmuring, discontented spirit we had within us. Perhaps you, my brother, thought you were a strong believer until your present trial came, and now you have proved how feeble your faith really is. You imagined that you were better than the rest of God’s saints because you could sing when they could only groan, but now you have hard work to keep from groaning yourself.

It is a blessed thing when the blows of God’s rod lay us low at our Father’s feet. The safest position for a child of God is to lie flat upon the Rock of Ages. With all the joy and confidence that I trust we feel when we reflect upon our Lord’s promises, and His solemn oath and covenant, yet when we think of our own imperfections and unfaithfulness, we are compelled to bow very humbly before the throne of grace.

Turning to another side of the subject, let me say that there is no reason why the hand of the Lord should not be upon us without our having any particular trouble. When we have come up to God’s house to worship Him, I trust that we have often felt “the hand of the LORD” upon us, pressing us down very low in a sense of our own weakness and unworthiness. There are other things beside affliction that can humble us beneath the mighty hand of God. When Peter’s boat began to sink because it was full of fish, Peter went down too, and he cried to Jesus, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

When we think of all the Lord’s goodness to us, we cry out, somewhat as David did, “Who are we, O LORD; and what is our house, that thou hast done such great things for us?” If we have “the hand of the LORD” upon us in this sense, it will not crush us, nor drive us to despondency or despair, but it will make us realize our own nothingness while it will also give us a grateful sense of our Lord’s lovingkindness and condescension in dealing so graciously with us.

Yet this humbling “hand of the LORD” is also at the same time an uplifting hand. The Christian is often a riddle to himself, he cannot tell how it is that the lower he sinks the higher he rises. Thus he sings, with Dr. Watts—

*“The more Thy glories strike mine eyes,
The humbler I shall lie;
Thus, while I sink, my joys shall rise
Immeasurably high.”*

The truest joy is the joy of the creature in being made nothing that God may be All in all, the joy of emptiness in receiving of the divine fullness, the joy of utter weakness laying hold upon the divine strength. Have you never, dear friends, in the worship of God, felt His hand gloriously bearing you aloft that not merely were worldly cares forgotten, with all the things that concern time and sense, but you seemed to forget that you were still in the body, and that the body was upon the earth?

There have been times with some of us when “the hand of the LORD” has been so blessedly upon us that He has seemed to open the pearly gates, and bid us enter. We have stood, awe-stricken, and yet full of joy in the presence of the Eternal, and we have worshipped Him with cherubim and seraphim, and have anticipated the day when we shall join the heavenly throng to go no more out forever.

“The hand of the LORD” when it is upon us thus is so uplifting that we feel as though the joys of our spirit are more than our bodily frame can bear, and we cry with the spouse, “Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love.” May we often feel this downcasting and yet uplifting power of “the hand of the LORD” upon us!

Further, “the hand of the LORD” is a healing hand as well as a smiting and wounding one. Whenever it is laid upon a poor troubled conscience, it brings peace at once. There is no furrow in the brow which God’s finger cannot smooth away. There is no burden upon the shoulders which God’s hand cannot remove. Perhaps your heart was so heavy that you thought you would never be able to rejoice again, yet the Lord did but touch you, and your depression was gone in a moment.

There is an old fiction about the touch of a royal hand curing disease, but the royal hand of the King of kings really does what the other was only fabled to do. Let Him but touch the suffering soul and healing comes at once. It is useless for us to go to war with our besetting sins at our own charges, but when the Lord stretches forth His hand against them, it is another matter.

Beloved friends may sometimes seek to set us right, yet through their want of wisdom they may only aggravate the evil, but when God lays His hand upon the sin, drags it to the light, tries and convicts it, and hangs it up to die, then are we most blessedly delivered from it. If our besetting sin is a fiery temper, or a slothful nature, or a strange temptation to some other evil, may “the hand of the LORD” be so graciously upon us this evening that it shall heal us even before we go to our homes.

The Lord's hand is also a strengthening hand to all His children. Let Him but lay His hand upon you and then, as your days so shall your strength be. Isaiah trembled when he saw “the King, the LORD of hosts,” but one of the seraphim touched his lips with a live coal from the altar, and then, in answer to the Lord's question, “Whom, shall I send, and who will go for Us?” he said, “Here am I; send me.” So surely, when God touches the lips with His finger, power goes into the messenger whom He sends forth on His mission of mercy.

Moses was very loth to go as God's ambassador to Pharaoh, and among his many excuses he urged that he was slow of speech, and of a slow tongue, but the Lord said to him, “Who hath made man's mouth?”—as much as to say, “He who made your mouth knew what He was doing, and He did not make a mistake when He gave you a slow tongue. Go you in His strength, and you shall be mighty enough to deliver His people out of the land of Egypt.”

God wrought through the weakness of Moses, and so glorified Himself over the mighty Pharaoh, and so shall it be with us, my brethren and sisters in Christ, ministers, Sunday school teachers, tract distributor, or whatever you may be, if “the hand of the LORD” shall be upon us, God shall be glorified in our weakness, and we shall be mighty through Him to the pulling down of strongholds.

Tarry in the Jerusalem of your prayer closet until you are endued with power from on high, for “they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength,” and then in His name and in His might go forth to the service to which He has called you.

I may also add that, to many of you, “the hand of the LORD” is a well-known hand. You have been receiving from it all your days. You have gone to it thousands of times so that it has become very familiar to you, and there is one mark in that hand which has made it especially dear to you, for “the hand of the LORD” from which you receive everything is a nail-pierced hand, for it is the hand of the man Christ Jesus as well as the hand of the Almighty God, and hard by the print of the nail is your own name, for He has said to you, “I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.” When that divine human hand, once outstretched upon the cross for our redemption, is laid upon us, then do we rejoice with exceeding great joy.

Now for a little while let us *look at this expression in its relation to sinners in whom a gracious work is beginning*. And here I must remind you that if “the hand of the LORD” is ever laid upon you thus, then it will come, first, as a creating hand. It is the hand of God, and that hand alone, which can create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you, nothing but the divine touch can ever make “a new creature in Christ Jesus.” If all the angels had united all their powers, they could never have created a world, and if all the ministers in the world were to combine their efforts, they could never create a new creature in Christ.

Creation is the work of God alone, so may He graciously lay His hand upon you tonight! Though there is nothing in you for Him to begin with, remember that He made the world out of nothing, and He can make a new man of you out of nothing. It is true that your whole being, spiritually, is without form, and void, and darkness is upon the face of the deep, but He who brought order out of chaos, and said, “Let there be light,” and there was light, can do the same for you. May you become a new proof His creating power, so that the angels may sing over you as they once did over a newly made world!

Yet let me tell you that wherever “the hand of the LORD” comes, it always comes at first as a breaking hand. As soon as God’s hand is laid upon us, down go the images of our pride as Dagon fell upon his face before the ark of God, and our self-righteousness, our self-conceit, our carnal confidence, and everything else that is displeasing to the Most High are dashed in pieces by the blows from His almighty hand.

It is a blessed thing to be put into God’s mortar, that He may pound us with the pestle that He holds in His hand until He has crushed and bruised us so as to bring us to self-despair, for then it will not be long before that same blessed hand of His shall bind up where He has broken, and heal where he has wounded. It is His prerogative to say, “I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.”

If you could go to some eminent surgeon, it would be a strong argument if you could say to him, “O sir, I pray you to heal me, for you did yourself cause this gaping wound, it was by your sharp knife that this gash was made, so will you not bind it up?” So go to God, sinner, with that poor broken heart of yours, and say to Him, “Lord, You did break it, will You not bind it up? You are JEHOVAH-ROPHI, will You not heal me?”

You know how David prayed, “Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.” God is a bone-breaker, and He is also a bone-mender, He is also a heartbreaker, yet He delights to bind up the hearts that He has broken, so go to Him, sinner, and ask Him to lay His hand upon you, first breaking, and then binding up, first killing, and then making alive.

Further, to sum up briefly, “the hand of the LORD” is a receiving hand, and if you go to Him, sinner, He will receive you graciously, and love you freely. It is also an upholding hand, and it will hold you up so that your feet shall not slip. It is an enriching hand, with which the Lord will give generously to you both in providence and in grace, it is a guiding hand, with which the Lord shall direct your steps, and at last it shall be an opening hand, with which the Lord shall open the gates of glory, that you may enter there, to go no more out for ever.

II. Our second question was to be WHAT TIME WAS THIS?

“The hand of the LORD was upon me *in the evening.*” There is a congruity in meditating upon this text in the eventide, so let us think upon it for a while in connection with our own inward experience.

And first, beloved, when you and I have felt “the hand of the LORD” upon us in the evening, I think it has come very seasonably *to remind us of the day’s sin.* Eventide is a good time for casting up the sum of the day, there ought to be set seasons for balancing our accounts. I am afraid that most us are so busy that we neglect this important duty, but it is well to devote a few minutes at night to a review of the day that has gone. Recall your actions, your words, your thoughts, look at your sins that you may repent of them, look at your follies that you may avoid them in the future, look at your mistakes that you may not fall into them again.

As you turn over all these things in your evening meditation, what a blessed thing it is to feel “the hand of the LORD” upon you making your conscience tender, not allowing you to play with sin as though it were a trifle, but assuring you, by a gentle pressure, that all your sin is put away through the great atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus your Lord and Savior!

It seems to me that eventide is also *a very blessed time for feelings of gratitude.* How many are God’s thoughts concerning us during a single day! When we rose this morning, I suppose that most if not all of us found that our food and raiment had been provided for us. We have been busy all day and have had just strength enough to get through our work. We have been preserved, perhaps, in the midst of temptations to which others have yielded, where they have stumbled and fallen, we have been graciously upheld, and now at eventide we are thinking of the many mercies which “the hand of the LORD” has bestowed upon us during the day.

If we are delivered from some accident, we say what a merciful providence it was that we escaped, yet we are apt to forget the merciful providence when there is no accident. I have heard of a father who, in the days when there were no railways, wanted to see his son who lived a long way off, and agreed to

meet him at a place half way between their two houses. Each had to ride about fifty miles, and when they met, the son said to his father, "I have had a very special providence, for my horse stumbled three times, yet it did not fall." "Well," said the father, "I also have had a very special providence, for my horse did not stumble once all the way." This was quite as notable a providence as the son had experienced, but it is one that is often left unnoticed.

Our mercies which pass unobserved are probably ten times as numerous as those which we perceive. It is well, therefore, at least at the close of every day, to look back upon all the mercy that has been vouchsafed to us during the day, and to realize that "the hand of the LORD" is still upon us in the evening, shielding us from all harm, guiding us in His own good way, and providing most graciously for all our needs.

Eventide is also *a special reminder of the eventide of life*. We sometimes say that we—

***"Long for evening to undress,
That we may rest with God,"—***

and to a Christian, dying is very much like going to bed. Being buried is just having our clothes put away while we are asleep in Jesus. Therefore, as eventide is a reminder and type of dying, it is specially appropriate for us then to feel "the hand of the LORD" upon us, and to realize that He has brought us there, to the margin of the river, and that He says to us, "You will have to cross that river some day, so dip your foot in it now, and try to get used to dying."

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "I die daily," He was rehearsing his part every day, so that when the time came for him to actually die, he was fully prepared, and was not taken unawares. It would be well if we could hear one say, "As I stood by my bedside, and took off my clothes, I felt that if I were now called to put off my body, which is the clothing of my soul, I could do it with as much complacency as I removed my garments, and when I laid my head upon my pillow, and closed my eyes, I felt as easy in the thought of that being my last sleep as I have felt when simply going to my bed." If this is how we are able to talk, we may confidently say, "The hand of the LORD lay upon me in the evening."

I like too, the thought of this manifestation of God in the evening because *the evening is usually the quiet time that is specially suited to meditation*. The morning is the time for action, the day is the time for work, but the evening is the time for meditation. It is well if we then have the inclination as well as the opportunity for communing with God, though I am afraid that our hearts are not always ready for this high privilege even when the season is peculiarly favorable for it. May you, dear friends, feel "the hand of the LORD" upon you every evening, and may you feel it very specially this evening!

We are in the midst of a most gracious work in this congregation, we began with earnest prayer, and we are now receiving the blessing that we have asked at the Lord's hands. During the past week we have had a most blessed fulfillment of that promise, "While they are yet speaking, I will hear." While we have been asking the Lord to bless, He has been blessing, and tonight we want again to feel "the hand of the LORD" upon us.

When the preacher feels the Lord's hand on him, there is no lack of power or energy in his sermons, when the deacons and elders feel it, there is no lack of attention to the duties of their important offices, when the church members feel it, there are no dull, lifeless prayer meetings, and when any individual Christians feels it, his heart is made to burn within him while his Master talks with him by the way. May it be so with every one of us!

III. Our third question was to be, WHAT TEACHING IS THERE FOR US IN THIS INCIDENT?

The text seems to me to teach us, first, *to look above man*. Ezekiel says, "The hand of the LORD was upon me"—not the hand of the king, nor the hand of the priest, but "the hand of the LORD." The first question with many persons, when the service is over, very often is, "Well, how did you like the minister." But really, dear friends, that is a very unimportant question, the vital matter is—Did you see Jesus as the preacher sought to lift Him up before you? Was "the hand of the LORD" upon you, pressing

you down to the ground under the weight of your many sins, and then setting you gloriously at liberty by casting all your sins behind His back into the depths of the sea to be remembered against you no more forever? That is the chief business of our coming together in these great assemblies, that we may be brought into real, close, personal contact with God, and see His power and His glory in the sanctuary.

As for the preacher, he is of no more account than the lad with the five barley loaves and two small fishes, but if the Master will add His blessing, the multitudes shall be fed spiritually even as the thousands were then fed literally, and He shall have all the glory. I pray you, dear friends, never to be content with a sermon unless it brings you into yet closer fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and lifts your eyes above man unto Him to whom you are bidden to look.

Then, as you are to look above other men, much more are you to *look above yourselves*. In one sense, it is hard work to keep a Christian's eyes looking up, but in another sense, it is equally difficult to keep them looking down. You may rake over the dunghills of your own corruption to try to find something good, but you will only find what Paul calls dung, but if you look up to the Most High, you will not search in vain for treasures that will endure forever. If you will persist in looking within, look there till you are tired, and then do not look any longer.

One look at Jesus Christ will remunerate you far better than twenty looks at yourself. No doubt there are certain marks and evidences of the Christian life for which it is quite right to look, yet it is better to look at the marks of the Savior's wounds, and to see the evidences of God's love manifested in the person and work of His well-beloved Son. It is much more profitable to look at the Creator than at the creature. If you must bring self in at all, let it only be as Ezekiel did when he said, "The hand of the LORD was upon me in the evening."

This text should also encourage us to *remember previous divine visitations*. I suppose Ezekiel had often felt the hand of the Lord upon him, but this time he recorded it. David called to remembrance former manifestations of God's mercy when he wrote, "O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar."

Sailors keep a logbook in which they enter the principal incidents of the voyage, and Christian, you ought to keep a log of your voyage to heaven, and you should specially record the visitations of God to your soul. There may come times when you will not have these visits, and then, if you turn to your diary, you will be able to call to remembrance the joyous seasons of the past, and it will be a great comfort to you to recollect the experiences you passed through on Mizar's hill and Hermon's mount.

There are certain occasions that some of us can never forget, and in our dark hours we think of them and say, "Lord, by all that we have felt in the past we are assured that You will not let us go, but that You will hold us fast to the end."

And to close, I think that this should encourage us *in our darkening hours to expect the light of God's presence*. It was the evening, the sun was going down, but the Sun of righteousness was still shining upon Ezekiel, the stars began to sparkle in the heavens, but the promises of God were brighter still. The night was coming on, but the prophet did not dread it, for although he could not see his Lord's face, he could feel his Lord's hand upon him.

It is one of the enjoyments of faith to walk with God in the dark. It is not the enjoyment of sight because it comes in the evening, when strength is declining, and life itself is dying out. Ah! that eventide will soon come to every one of us when we shall have to bid farewell to the fond pursuits of the day, that "night" of which our Savior said that then "no man can work," and when that night comes on, and we begin to feel its chilly dews settling upon our dying brows, when the hoar-frost of death shall be upon every limb, how blessed it shall be to have a bright and glowing lamp within our soul which will owe none of its brilliance to sun or moon, but to the Lord God who gives us the light that shall last forever.

"At evening time it shall be light." In some parts of the world there is no twilight, as soon as the sun sets, night follows immediately, but here in England our long evenings are a great delight, and certainly so also is the long evening of a well spent life, when you have to a great extent finished with the toil and

turmoil of earthly service, and your soul has a blessed season of resting, as Bunyan's pilgrims had in the land Beulah, until the summons came for them to cross the river, and go into the presence of the King.

It will be a blessed thing to feel the hand of the LORD upon us in that evening, and whether it be long or short, all will be well with all who are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. Even though we have to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil, for He will be with us, His rod and His staff shall comfort us, and when we get to heaven, we will tell the angels that "the hand of the LORD" was upon us in the morning of our days when we gave our young hearts to the Lord, that His hand was upon us in the noontide of middle life while we were toiling for Him with all our might, that His hand was upon us in the afternoon helping us still to gather the precious grain into His garner, and that His hand was upon us, as it was upon Ezekiel, in the evening.

As the Lord God walked in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day, so will He be with us in the eventide of our lives, and though we must go to bed, and sleep in the tomb, we shall awake in His likeness, and then shall we be satisfied, and His hand shall still be upon us in the morning—that morning which shall be to us without mourning, that day which shall never have a night, that blessedness which shall last forever. God grant that this may be the portion of each one of us, for His dear Son's sake! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PSALM 92

Verse 1. *It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:*

It is good in itself. It is good for those who hear it, but it is specially good for our own hearts to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto the name of the Most High. Sometimes, when we are very heavy in spirit, if we would take care not to defraud the Lord of the revenue of praise that is due unto Him, we should find that the readiest way to bring comfort to ourselves is to sing praises unto His holy name.

Brother and sisters in Christ, it is not very notable work to praise God when all things go well with us, it is far grander work to praise Him when everything seems to be against us. It is because the nightingale does sing by night that she has such excellence among the birds, and if you and I can praise God in the dark, then we shall find that it is a good thing for ourselves to give thanks to the Lord, and to sing praises unto the name of the Most High.

2. *To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night* [See sermon #1138, Morning and Evening Songs].

Begin the day by setting forth the Lord's lovingkindness. It was His lovingkindness that watched over you when you lay unconscious and defenseless, and could not therefore protect yourself, it was His lovingkindness that drew aside the curtain of the night, that touched your eyelids, and awoke you out of that sleep which was the image of death, and bade you look out upon the rising sun. Therefore take the key of the morning to open the day, and let it be the golden key of praise, show forth the Lord's lovingkindness in the morning.

And when night comes again, let us then sing of God's faithfulness. We have experienced it through another day, let us praise Him for it. Now we see how He has borne with us, pardoned us, preserved us, supplied our needs, and continued to educate us throughout another day, let us therefore praise and bless His holy name, and so close the day, and commit ourselves to sleep again under His divine protection.

3. *Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the psaltery; upon the harp with a solemn sound.*

Under the old dispensation, instrumental music seemed more congruous than it does now with the spiritual worship into which we have been introduced. If we must ever have instrumental music in our

worship, let it be the same—the very same as David had, and then I for one, though I should still think it was going back to the old dispensation long since superseded, would put up with it.

I could never get much further than that, I think, for what instrument is there that is equal to the human voice, what music can be compared with it? All other sound is but the poor attempt of man to rival the creation of his God, but the human voice is full of charming melodies and harmonies, and if it is controlled by a true heart, there is nothing like it even to our ears, while it seems to me that it must be far more acceptable to God than the product of mere mechanism.

4. *For thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*

There is a blessed verse to come from the heart and mind of a happy man who is praising God, and who looks on all the works of the Lord, in creation, providence, and redemption, and makes them all the subject of his joyous song.

5. *O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep.*

There is little that we know of the thoughts of God except as we gather them from His works or learn them from His Word, “for what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.” It is by divine revelation that we must know the thoughts of God, and the more we know of them, the more shall we realize that they are very deep.

6. *A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.*

He looks at nature, and as he sees its varied operations, he observes certain eternal laws as he calls them, but he does not see the power at the back of those laws which makes the laws potent for the government of the world. Nay, he lives and walks where God has displayed His power to the full, yet he fails to see Him. It would be a strange proceeding for anyone to go into an artist’s house, and look at his pictures and his sculpture, and yet never to think of him, but this is what the brutish man does with regard to the works of God, and with regard to God Himself.

7. *When the wicked spring as the grass,—*

Numerous, fresh, vigorous—

7. *And when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.*

That is the end to which they will surely come, no matter how much they boast, nor how they grow and flourish till they seem, like the grass in the meadow, to cover everything, so that you can go nowhere without seeing them. Yet “they shall be destroyed for ever.”

8. *But thou, LORD, art most high for evermore.*

The psalmist began by calling the Lord most high, and now he says that He is “most high for evermore.” Yes, this is our joy that God never passes away, He abides forever. Myriads of the ungodly have come and gone, empires of wickedness have risen to great power, and in due time have passed away like dreams, but we can still say, with the psalmist, “Thou, LORD, art most high for evermore.”

9-10. *For, lo, thine enemies, O LORD, for, lo, thine enemies shall perish; all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil* [See sermon #1649, Freshness].

The believer, though he is very weak in his own consciousness, and utterly insignificant in his own esteem, shall receive fresh power from God, and when the wicked melt away, he shall grow stronger and stronger.

11. *Mine eyes also shall see my desire on mine enemies, and mine ears shall hear my desire of the wicked that rise up against me.*

The translators put in the words, *my desire*, in both cases they are printed in italics to show that they are not in the original. No doubt the psalmist means that his eye should see the end of his enemies, and his ears should hear of their total overthrow.

12. *The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.*

The palm tree flourishes amidst the desert sunshine, growing straight upright towards heaven without a branch that deviates to the right or the left, and bearing its great masses of fruit as near heaven

as ever it can. It is a fine type of Christian life and growth and fruitfulness. A Christian should also be "like a cedar in Lebanon," firmly rooted in his appointed place, and defying the winter's snows which threaten to bury him out of sight.

13. *Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God.*

Like trees planted in the courtyard, screened and protected, such are true believers, God is their defense, and they are screened within the court of the Lord's house.

14. *They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;*

When worldlings decay, they shall still be fruitful. They shall not feel, as so many others do, that their age is a curse; it shall be to them a blessing, ripening them for eternity, and it shall be a blessing to all by whom they are surrounded.

15. *To shew that the LORD is upright: he is my rock,—*

Can each one of you say that concerning the Lord, "He is my rock, my foundation, my refuge, my shelter"?

15. *And there is no unrighteousness in him.*

Say that when you have lost the dearest one you ever knew. Say that when your property has melted like the hoar frost in the morning. Say that when every bone in your body is aching, and some fell disease is hastening you to an early grave. "There is no unrighteousness in him." How long have you known Him? If it be seventy years or more than that, He has never been unfaithful to you, nor suffered a single promise of His to fail. Write this down as the testimony of the experience of all God's people, "There is no unrighteousness in him."

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.